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International scientific vocabulary

International scientific vocabulary (**ISV**) comprises scientific and specialized words whose language of origin may or may not be certain, but which are in current use in several modern languages (that is, translingually). The name "International Scientific Vocabulary" was first used by Philip Gove in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1961).[1] As noted by Crystal,[2] science is an especially productive field for new coinages.

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Instances

According to *Webster's Third*, "some ISV words (like haploid) have been created by taking a word with a rather general and simple meaning from one of the languages of antiquity, usually Latin and Greek, and conferring upon it a very specific and complicated meaning for the purposes of modern scientific discourse." An ISV word is typically a classical compound or a derivative which "gets only its raw materials, so to speak, from antiquity." Its morphology may vary across languages.

The online version of Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged (Merriam-Webster, 2002)[3] adds that the ISV "consists of words or other linguistic forms current in two or more languages" that "differ from New Latin in being adapted to the structure of the individual languages in which they appear."[4] In other words, ISV terms are often made with Greek, Latin, or other combining forms, but each language pronounces the resulting neo-lexemes within its own phonemic "comfort zone", and makes morphological connections using its normal morphological system. In this respect ISV can be viewed as heavily borrowing loanwords from New Latin.

McArthur[5] characterizes ISV words and morphemes as "translinguistic", explaining that they operate "in many languages that serve as mediums for education, culture, science, and technology." Besides European languages, such as Russian, Swedish, English, and Spanish, ISV lexical items also function in Japanese, Malay, Philippine languages, and other Asian languages. According to McArthur, no other set of words and morphemes is so international.

The ISV is one of the concepts behind the development and standardization of the constructed language called Interlingua. Scientific and medical terms in Interlingua are largely of Greco-Latin origin, but, like most Interlingua words, they appear in a wide range of languages. Interlingua's vocabulary is established using a group of *control languages* selected because they radiate words into, and absorb words from, a large number of other languages. A *prototyping* technique then selects the most recent common ancestor of each eligible Interlingua word or affix. The word or affix takes a contemporary form based on the control languages. This procedure is meant to give Interlingua the most generally international vocabulary possible.[6]

Words and word roots that have different meanings from those in the original languages

This is a list of scientific words and word roots which have different meanings from those in the original languages.

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word or root	scientific meaning	original language	original word	original meaning	notes
andro-, -ander	stamen	Greek	ἀνδρ-, ἀνδηρ	man	in flowers of flowering plants
gynaec-, -gyne	carpel	Greek	γυναικ-, γυνη	woman	
capno-	carbon dioxide	Greek	καπνός	smoke	
electro-	electricity	Greek	ἤλεκτρον	amber	via static electricity from rubbing amber
thorax	chest (anatomy)	Greek	θώραξ	breastplate	
toxo-	poison	Greek	τόξον	bow (weapon)	via "poisoned arrow". It means "bow" in *Toxodon* and "arc" in *isotoxal*.
macro-	big	Greek	μακρός	long	
In names of biological taxa					
-ceras	ammonite	Greek	κέρας	horn	via resemblance to a ram's horn
-crinus	crinoid	Greek	κρίνος	lily	extracted from name "crinoid"
grapto-	graptolite	Greek	γραπτός	writing	via resemblance of fossil
-gyrinus	labyrinthodont	Greek	γυρῖνος	tadpole	
-lestes	predator	Greek	λῃστής	robber	
-mimus	ornithomimid	Greek	μῖμος	mime	extracted from name *Ornithomimus* = "bird mimic"
-mys	rodent	Greek	μῦς	mouse	including in *Phoberomys*
-saurus	reptile, dinosaur	Greek	σαῦρος	lizard	
-stega, -stege	stegocephalian	Greek	στέγη	roof	via their cranium roofs as fossils
-suchus, -champsus	crocodilian	Ancient Egyptian	σοῦχος, χαμψαι (pl.)	as quoted by ancient Greek authors as Egyptian words for "crocodile"	
therium	usually mammal	Greek	θηρίον	beast, animal	
Names of bones					
femur	thighbone	Latin	*femur*	thigh	Classical Latin genitive often "feminis"
fibula	(a leg bone)	Latin	*fibula*	brooch	tibia & fibula looked like a brooch and its pin
radius	(an arm bone)	Latin	*radius*	spoke	
tibia	shinbone	Latin	*tibia*	flute	via animal tibias modified into flutes
ulna	(an arm bone)	Latin	*ulna*	elbow, cubit measure	
Other					
foetus	unborn baby	Medical Latin	*fētus*	As decl 1/2 adjective, "pregnant". As decl 4 noun, "the young of animals"	Classical Latin

Words and word roots that have one meaning from Latin and another meaning from Greek

This is a list of scientific words and word roots which have one meaning from Latin and another meaning from Greek.

word or root	scientific meaning from Latin	example	Latin word	Latin meaning	scientific meaning from Greek	example	Greek word	Greek meaning	notes
alg-	alga	alga	*alga*	seaweed	pain	analgesic	ἄλγος	pain	
crema-	burn	cremation	*cremare*	to burn (tr.)	hang, be suspended	cremaster	κρεμάννυμι	I hang (tr.)	

Other words and word roots with two meanings

This is a list of other scientific words and word roots which have two meanings.

word or root	scientific meaning 1	example	origin	original meaning	scientific meaning 2	example	origin	original meaning	notes
uro-	tail	*Uromastix*	Greek οὐρη	tail	urine	urology	Greek οὖρον	urine	
mento-	the mind	mental	Latin *mens*	the mind	(of the) chin	mentoplasty	Latin *mentum*	chin	

Other differences

Another difference between scientific terms and classical Latin and Greek is that many compounded scientific terms do not elide the inflection vowel at the end of a root before another root or prefix that starts with a vowel, e.g. gastr**o**enteritis; but elision happens in gastrectomy (not gastroectomy).

The Greek word τέρας (τέρατο-) = "monster" is usually used to mean "monster (abnormal)" (e.g. teratology, teratogen), but some biological names use it to mean "monster (enormous)" (e.g. the extinct animals *Teratornis* (a condor with a 12-foot wingspan) and *Terataspis* (a trilobite 2 feet long)).

See also

- Binomial nomenclature
- Combining form
- Classical compound
- English words of Greek origin.
- Greek and Latin roots in English
- Hybrid word
- Internationalism (linguistics)
- Latinization (literature)
- Lexicography
- Language for specific purposes dictionary
- Medical dictionary
- Medical terminology
- Scientific Latin
- Scientific terminology
- Systematic name
- Terminology

Lists

- List of abbreviations used in medical prescriptions
- List of Latin abbreviations
- List of Latin and Greek words commonly used in systematic names
- List of medical roots, suffixes and prefixes
- List of Germanic and Latinate equivalents
- List of Latin words with English derivatives
- List of Greek and Latin roots in English
- classification of elements and periodicity in properties

References

1. McArthur, Tom (editor), *The Oxford Companion to the English Language.* Oxford University Press, 1992.
2. Crystal, David, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language.* Cambridge University Press, 1995.
3. The online version is available by subscription.
4. "International scientific vocabulary." Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged. Merriam-Webster, 2002. (http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com) Accessed July 11, 2006.
5. McArthur, Tom, "Asian Lexicography: Past, Present, and Prospective", *Lexicography in Asia* (Introduction). Password Publishers Limited, 1998. (http://kdictionaries.com/lia-intro.html) Accessed January 17, 2007.
6. Gode, Alexander, *Interlingua: A Dictionary of the International Language*. New York: Storm Publishers, 1951.

External links

- Dictionary of Botanical Epithets (http://www.winternet.com/~chuckg/dictionary.html)
- List of Latin Words with Derivatives to English (https://web.archive.org/web/20070823220828/http://cdsjcl.f2g.net/derivatives.html)
- *Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language 1998* entry on International Scientific Vocabulary (http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O29-INTERNATIONALSCNTFCVCBLRY.html)

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